

Q. Do you think it's possible? Albright's using her wiles. *[Laughter]*

The President. I don't know. That's better than I could have said it. *[Laughter]*

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:25 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his re-

marks, he referred to Edgar Bronfman, president, World Jewish Congress; Barry R. McCaffrey, Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy; Senator Jesse Helms; and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

Statement on the Report on Religious Freedom July 22, 1997

I welcome today's release of the Secretary of State's report on United States Policies in Support of Religious Freedom. Promoting religious freedom around the world is a key part of our human rights policy and an important focus of our diplomacy.

Today's report will help shine a spotlight on the serious problem of religious intolerance and persecution. It also underscores the importance of concerted actions by the United States and other like-minded nations to promote religious freedom.

The report fulfills a congressional request for a summary of U.S. policies to reduce and eliminate persecution against Christians around the world. It also describes our efforts to address religious persecution more broadly, which have included defending the rights of Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Baha'is, and others to practice their faiths freely. Religious freedom is a fundamental

human right, and the United States vigorously condemns persecution against any believer and all faiths.

Our Nation was founded by men and women seeking refuge from religious persecution. Religious freedom is the first freedom guaranteed in our Bill of Rights. I am pleased that our Nation has been a leader in promoting religious rights, including through the establishment last year of the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad, through our willingness to press for religious liberty at the United Nations and in our relations with other nations, and through our determination to report fairly and accurately on these issues around the world. Today's report is part of America's larger commitment to help people of all faiths to live free of persecution and to worship in the freedom that is their birthright.

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Reception July 22, 1997

Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, one of the things that I really want before I leave this office in 3½ years is to be able to stand here with Dick Gephardt and have him introduce me and have me say, "Thank you, Mr. Speaker." And your presence here tonight makes that more likely.

I thank Martin Frost for his tireless efforts, often thankless efforts. Some of you he has doubtless almost irritated asking for help. *[Laughter]* But we are working hard to bring back the House of Representatives to our party

in the 1998 elections. And let me assure you that it can be done. I know that it can be done, but what I want you to understand is that it should be done. And I will just give you—just think about two or three things.

Number one, as Congressman Gephardt said, in 1993, with only votes from Members of our party, we passed an economic plan which exceeded all of our expectations. The deficit is now 77 percent lower than it was in 1993—with only votes from our party—and it helped to grow this economy.